

KASOTC

CONSTRUCTION PROGRESSING ON THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS TRAINING CENTER IN JORDAN.

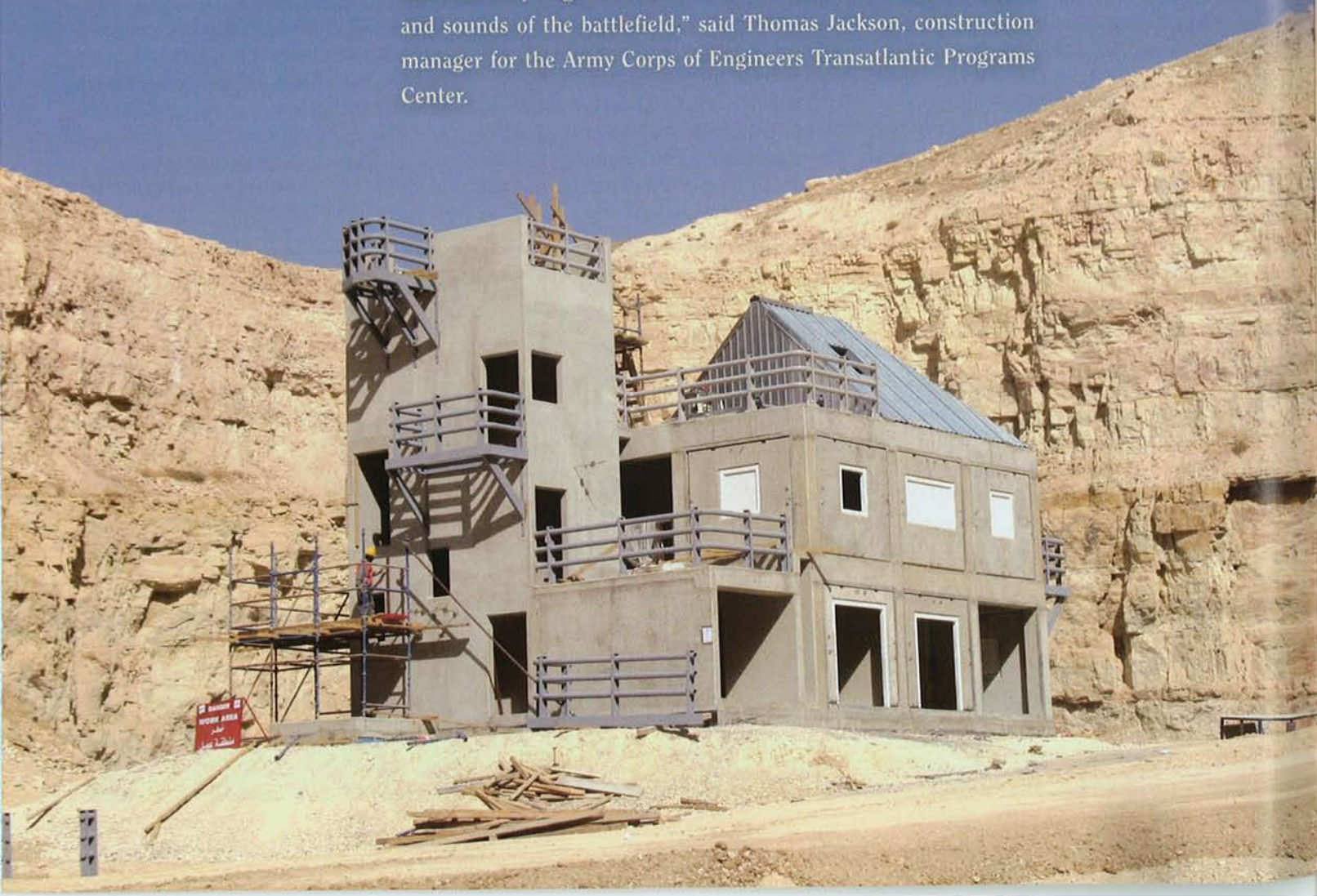
By JOAN KIBLER

Two years ago, several Jordanian and U.S. government agencies joined forces to plan, design and construct the King Abdullah II Special Operations Training Center (KASOTC).

Today, a former 1,235-acre rock quarry outside Amman is being transformed into a state-of-the-art training center for special operations forces. Construction is now more than 60 percent complete.

When finished, special operations forces will train in counterterrorism and security operations resembling real-world situations.

"This means they will train in an environment that will be just like what they might encounter with terrorists, including the sights and sounds of the battlefield," said Thomas Jackson, construction manager for the Army Corps of Engineers Transatlantic Programs Center.





[Above] The 300-meter rifle range, under construction, has two forms of targets: the human form targets and the moving infantry targets.

[Left] Area F facilities. The range observation tower in the center overlooks the industrial area, lower left; the public square and government buildings, lower right.

"If special forces have to conduct house-to-house searches, KASOTC provides that infrastructure in a training environment," he continued. "If they have to rescue hostages on an airplane, KASOTC provides the plane. If they have to rescue hostages from an embassy, KASOTC provides an embassy structure.

"Special operations forces will be able to train in areas that resemble cities, urban areas, and other locations that affect how tactical operations are conducted. This center provides training that's as realistic as possible."

The facilities will be equipped with the latest technologies in targets, range equipment, automation and simulation of battle scenarios—all in a safe environment where trainers can monitor every training event. Importantly, special operations forces will train using live fire in these realistic settings. Other training events will use simulation and laser techniques.

PARTNERS

KASOTC is a joint initiative of the Jordanian and U.S. governments to train Jordanian, U.S., and regional allies in the fight against terror. Several organizations are involved:

- The King Abdullah II Design and Development Bureau (KADDB), an organization within the Jordanian Armed Forces, manages the project.
- The Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT) serves as the program manager for the U.S. government, working with KADDB to develop the criteria for the training facilities.
- The Transatlantic Programs Center (TAC) is responsible for design and construction, with contracts awarded to:
 - Stanley Consultants Inc., for design
 - American International Contractors Inc./Syska/Archirodon for construction.
- The Army's Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training and Instrumentation (PEO STRI) is acquiring the targets and equipment.
- KASOTC is valued at \$90 million, consisting of facilities design and construction, installation of targets and instrumentation, and a static A300 Airbus trainer.
- Colonel Maher Halaseh, KASOTC project director for KADDB, has said that the centralized facility "in the heart of the Middle East region" will benefit regional allies by providing the best practices in counterterrorism training.



Area F facilities. The range observation center overlooks the light industrial area, near the top of the photo. In the foreground are apartment buildings and other facilities that would be found in a village setting.

FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION

KASOTC is being built at Yajooz, near the capital. The dramatic, rocky terrain and steep cliffs are uniquely suited for a wide range of counterterrorism training, including live-fire exercises.

"The site was divided into several areas to meet the functional requirements," Jackson said.

"Area A facilities include officers quarters, NCO dormitory, a mosque, a clinic, and administrative buildings. These facilities will be used by Jordanian Armed Forces personnel who will be based on site. In addition, student dormitories will house the trainees."

Area B includes a warehouse and carpentry workshop.

Area C includes grenade range and ordnance storage.

Area D has a 100-meter pistol and rifle range and a 300-meter rifle range. Both have control towers for controlling the pop-up targets and infantry targets that move on rails.

Because of the terrain, ranges and villages will use the natural geography of the high cliffs to contain shots within the prescribed areas of fire. "Soldiers will be able to shoot with little fear of bullets going offsite,"

said Salem Fares, resident engineer in TAC's Jordan office.

This area also contains a multi-use tower, highly visible in many areas of the training site. "This eight-story tower can be used for climbing and repelling and for other training, such as distance firing," Jackson said.

Area E contains specialized training facilities such as:

- Aircraft training facilities, which consist of a full-size Airbus A-300 fuselage that will be shipped this spring and installed later this summer and an aircraft control tower.
- The assault and demolition facilities with two significant training areas:
- The close-quarters battle (CQB) house is a three-story, armored facility with an adjoining five-story tower that provides room-to-room combat practice using live fire.

"The training presented in the CQB building will prepare special forces to enter a building, engage in close combat to gain control, and set up a command post," Jackson said. "Everything is realistic. Soldiers will have to make decisions about rules of

engagement and when to shoot or not shoot, just as they would encounter when engaged in battle."

The method of entry building is a two-story structure that will be used to train forces in methods of entry techniques. It has removable panels that can be replaced after the training exercise.

"If forces are required to blow the wall to get in, they can do that," Jackson said. "The training facility will have the capacity to manufacture all of the precast panels used in this building."

Area F contains a wide range of urban and village facilities to simulate realistic neighborhoods, to include residential areas, commercial and industrial facilities, and government buildings.

"These areas look like typical village, city and countryside settings, using Middle Eastern architecture," Fares said. "Some buildings are complete structures; some use mock-up facades."

Area F includes a public square; villas, apartment complexes and servants quarters; community center, garage, gas station and shopping; light industrial areas; office complexes; and water reservoirs.

"This training area also offers a refugee camp and a building that can be used as an embassy or palace," Fares said.

The \$70 million construction contract is expected to be finished by September. The construction contractor has had approximately 2,000 workers on site, with no lost-time accidents.

INSTRUMENTATION

Once construction is complete, the technology will be installed.

KASOTC will be outfitted with the most durable technology, which was identified by the Jordanian Ministry of Defense and SOC-CENT, to meet stringent technical and safety standards.

PEO STRI is working with vendors to provide all training aids, simulators, instruments and targets that are part of the training program.

In all training scenarios, technology will be used to the maximum. Trainers will control and monitor all training scenarios. Students will get immediate feedback on their performance.

Certain training facilities have associated control towers, such as the ranges with both

pop-up and mechanized targets that move on rails. They have reporting systems that record statistics for each trainee, such as the number of hits. These reporting systems meet standard military criteria or better.

A range observation tower overlooks all training in Area F. From here, training requirements are directed. The trainers can even change battle scenarios in real time from this location.

Training is recorded using the highest quality video cameras. A theater with a high-resolution multi-media system provides real-time viewing of the training. Such reviews allow students to make constant improvement.

"KASOTC's training facilities are laid out so that trainers can run multiple training scenarios concurrently, and they can change them as they need to—just as special operations forces would encounter in real scenarios," Jackson said.

"The facilities and equipment are set up to provide the most realistic counterterrorism training that these forces may encounter."

This project is being accomplished through the Foreign Military Sales program, the U.S. government's program for transferring defense articles, services and training to other nations and international organizations, according to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency.

Countries approved to participate in the program may fund the requirements or U.S. government-sponsored programs may be used. In this case, Jordan has contributed to the project's funding, and funding was also authorized under the FY2005 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act.

KASOTC is expected to open in early 2009. ★

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